

1. *MIMUS ORPHEUS*. *G. R. Gray*.

*Orpheus Calandria*, *D'Orb. & Lafr. Mag. de Zool.* (1835) p. 17.—*Voy. de l'Amer. Mer. Av.* 206. pl. x. f. 2.

*Turdus Orpheus*, *Spix. Av. t. 1.* pl. 71.

*Mimus saturninus*, *P. Max. Beitr.* p. 658?

*Orpheus modulator*, *Gould*, in *Proc. of Zool. Soc. Part IV.* (1836) p. 6.

This bird is described in the Proceedings of the Zoological Society (Part IV. 1836, p. 6.) as having come from the Straits of Magellan, which undoubtedly is a mistake. It is extremely common on the banks of the Plata; but a few degrees south of it, is replaced by the *O. Patagonica* of D'Orbigny. In Banda Oriental these birds are tame and bold; they constantly frequent the neighbourhood of the country houses to pick the meat, which is generally suspended to the posts and walls. If any other small bird joins in the feast, the Calandria (as this species is usually called in La Plata) immediately chases him away. In these respects, and in its manner of sometimes catching insects, the *Mimus* is related in its habits with that division of the *Muscicapidæ*, which includes the genus *Xolmis*: indeed, the general colour of the plumage of *X. Nengeta* is so like that of *Mimus*, that it might readily be mistaken for a bird of that genus. The Calandria haunts thickets and hedge-rows, where it actively hops about, and in doing so often elevates and slightly expands its tail.

2. *MIMUS PATAGONICUS*. *G. R. Gray*.

*Orpheus Patagonicus*, *D'Orb. & Lafr. Mag. de Zool.* 1836, p. 19.—*Voy. de l'Amer. Mer. Av.* p. 210, pl. xi. f. 2.

I obtained specimens of this bird at the Rio Negro and at Santa Cruz in Southern Patagonia, at both of which places it is common. It is not found in Tierra del Fuego, for neither it nor the other species of the genus inhabit forests. This species has slightly different habits from the *M. Orpheus*. It is a shy bird, and frequents the plains and valleys thinly scattered with stunted and thorn-bearing trees. It does not appear to move its tail so much. Its cry, like that of the rest of the genus, is harsh, but its song is sweet. The *M. Patagonicus*, whilst seated on the highest twig of some low bush, often enlivens the dreariness of the surrounding deserts by its varying song. Molina, however, describing the song of an allied species, has greatly exaggerated its charms. It may be compared to that of the sedge-bird (*Motacilla salicaria*, Linn.), but is much more powerful, some harsh notes and some very high ones being mingled with a pleasant warbling. The song of the different mocking thrushes certainly is

superior to that of any other bird which I heard in South America; and they are almost the only ones which formally perch themselves on an elevated twig for the purpose of singing. They sing only during the spring of the year. I may here mention, as a curious instance of the fine shades of difference in habits between very closely allied species, that when I first saw the *M. Patagonicus*, I concluded from habits alone that it was different from *M. Orpheus*. But having afterwards procured a specimen of the former, and comparing the two without particular care, they appeared so very similar that I changed my opinion. Mr. Gould, however, immediately upon seeing them (and he did not then know that *M. D'Orbigny* had described them as different) pronounced that they were distinct species; a conclusion in conformity with the trifling difference of habit and geographical range, of which he was not at the time aware.

3. *MIMUS THENCA*. *G. R. Gray*.

*Turdus Thenca*. *Mol.*

*Orpheus Thenca*. *D'Orb. Voy. de l'Amer. Mer. Orn.* p. 209, pl. f. 3.

This species seems to be confined to the coast of the Pacific, west of the Cordillera, where it replaces the *M. Orpheus*, and *M. Patagonicus* of the Atlantic side of the continent. Its southern limit is the neighbourhood of Concepcion, (lat. 37° S.) where the country changes from thick forests to an open land. The Thenca, (which is the name of this species, in the language of the Aboriginal Indians,) is common in central and northern Chile, and is likewise found (I believe the same species) near Lima, (lat. 12°) on the coast of Peru. The habits of the Thenca are similar, as far as I could perceive, to those of the *M. Patagonicus*. I observed many individuals, which had their heads stained yellow from the pollen of some flower, into which they bury their heads, probably for the sake of the small beetles concealed there. Molina describes the nest of the Thenca, as having a long passage, but I was assured by the country people, that this nest belonged to the *Synallaxis agithaloides*, and that the Thenca makes a simple nest, built externally of small prickly branches of the mimosa.